

I have been a sharp critic of proposed military action in Syria. I believed all along that there was a third way, that it was not a false choice between isolationism, not doing anything, and taking military action in Syria. The actions of OPCW and the United Nations have shown, in working in collaboration with the Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory, that diplomacy can work. We can go into Syria and identify these dangerous chemical weapons; we can dismantle them and make sure that a ruthless dictator never again can use them on his own people.

Together, the work of OPCW and Lawrence Livermore Laboratory has created a safer world. But they recognize that their work will not be complete until the world is free of chemical weapons.

I have been a tireless advocate for funding of both Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory and the other laboratory that is in my district, Sandia National Laboratory. The work that is being done right now with OPCW shows that the work being done at our national laboratories has value and that we cannot continue to chip away at Federal funding for our national laboratories.

Congratulations again to OPCW for receiving the Nobel Peace Prize, and I am very proud of the scientific community, the engineers at Lawrence Livermore for your work in support of OPCW and their efforts.

ADDRESSING CHALLENGING FISCAL ISSUES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New York (Mr. REED) for 5 minutes.

Mr. REED. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to highlight a framework I have designed which will begin to address the challenging fiscal issues we face as a Nation. This proposal is to deal with the impending debt ceiling crisis that will be coming upon us in February or shortly thereafter.

I am pleased to hear recent news today of a budget agreement dealing with a potential government shutdown resolution that avoids governing by crisis, but we have the debt ceiling issue right behind. What I have put forth, Mr. Speaker, is an honest, sincere proposal consisting of three steps to reduce our spending on the Federal level, address our Nation's broken Tax Code, and ensure the solvency of Social Security and Medicare.

Mr. Speaker, I outlined the proposal in a letter sent to the President on November 15 of this year, and that letter reads:

Dear Mr. President,

It is time. As I have expressed before in writing to you and members of your administration, I am very interested in working with you in a bipartisan manner to implement long-term solutions to America's debt problems. Our impending debt crisis and threats to the solvency of Social Security and Medicare must be solved now before they reach catastrophic levels. I urge you to work

with Congress to achieve a long-term solution. As such, I would like to take you up on your public offer to discuss ideas and implement solutions that will no longer force us to govern through crises, cliffs, or shutdown deadlines.

On October 16, 2013, you stated you are "Willing to work with anybody . . . Democrat or Republican, House or Senate Members on any idea that will grow our economy, create new jobs, strengthen the middle class, and get our fiscal house in order for the long term." To that end, I submit the following honest proposal which I truly believe will take a small but significant step forward toward more responsible governance. Also, I hope it might change the culture of Washington, D.C., to an environment where good policy triumphs over politics.

As you can see, the honest proposal is a multistep vision and plan summarized as follows:

Step 1, raise the February 7, 2014, debt ceiling limit in an amount equal to the total CBO score of spending reductions, reforms, and removal of waste, fraud, and abuse within government operations that have already been identified and supported on a bipartisan basis. Attached, please find a list of \$573 billion of such government reforms and spending reductions already identified to date.

Step 2a, upon completion of step 1, we will then move to step 2. In step 2, what we would propose is votes in the House and Senate on their respective visions for comprehensive tax reform and also for reform of our entitlement programs to ensure their solvency for another generation would occur. If those votes occur in the House and Senate, there would be automatic relief of the debt ceiling cap for an additional year.

And then we would move to step 3, Mr. President. Step 3 would essentially say, if in the House or the Senate we enact either one of those long-term solutions through our Tax Code or through our entitlement crisis with our Social Security and Medicare insolvency coming down on us, we would immediately, in step 3, relieve the debt ceiling for an additional 2-year period of time. This would mean, Mr. President, the debt ceiling restraint would no longer impact your administration as it would be automatically extended beyond the end of your administration's term.

I kindly request you review this proposal and then meet to discuss how it can be improved and implemented. To me, this is an honest proposal which will put Americans first and begin to address the pressing issues of our day. We have major debt issues that cannot wait any longer. Our arcane Tax Code stifles economic growth, and the fiscal health of Social Security and Medicare is worsening beyond control. If we solve these two challenges, we will place our children and grandchildren and our Nation's finances in a far better position than where they are now projected to be. To me, this adheres to a fundamental rule that we must pass America on to our next generation in a better condition than which we found her.

I look forward to hearing your thoughts and working with you to prevent the dire consequences of failing to address these challenges.

Mr. Speaker, I have yet to receive a response from the President, not even a courtesy response so I know it was received and not lost in the mail between my office in the Longworth Building and the White House, less than 2 miles away.

So I take to the floor of the House today to have my proposal officially recorded and to lay out this framework

to get our Nation on a path of fiscal sustainability, to get our American fellow citizens back to work by fixing our Tax Code, and solving the entitlement crisis that is impending upon us.

With that, I ask us to join in this proposal and ask the President to join us in a bipartisan manner to address these concerns.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Members are reminded to address their remarks to the Chair and not to a perceived viewing audience.

FOOD INSECURITY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. MCGOVERN) for 5 minutes.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, on Friday, the Republican leadership has decided we will adjourn for the holidays. Notwithstanding the fact that we haven't done immigration reform, we haven't passed a jobs bill, we haven't extended unemployment insurance, they have all decided it is time to go home and enjoy the holidays. So on Friday, we will all leave and go back to our districts.

The one thing we will all have in common, Democrats and Republicans, is we will go back and we will enjoy the holidays, and we will partake in many celebrations. And the one thing that we will not have to worry about is whether or not we will have enough to eat. Our concern, quite frankly, will be overeating.

But the fact is, for millions of our fellow citizens, close to 50 million Americans, they will have to worry about whether they will have enough to eat for them and their families. Fifty million people in this country, the richest country in the history of the world, are hungry; 17 million are kids. All kinds of people fall in that category. Sadly, close to 1 million of our veterans rely on food assistance programs because they don't have enough to eat.

Mr. Speaker, the fact that so many people in the United States of America are hungry is a national disgrace. We should be outraged. There should be outrage in this Chamber. There should be a sense of urgency that we need to solve this problem. Yet what we see is indifference and, in some cases, outright hostility toward those Americans who happen to be poor.

The House of Representatives recently passed a farm bill that cut the SNAP program, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, which is designed to ensure people have enough to eat. They cut that program by \$40 billion. In the Senate version, they cut it by about \$4.5 billion. There is now a conference committee going on, and press reports say that maybe they will decide on an \$8 billion cut.

Eight billion dollars, what does that mean? That means that 850,000 families in this country will be impacted in a negative way by that cut; 1.7 million people.